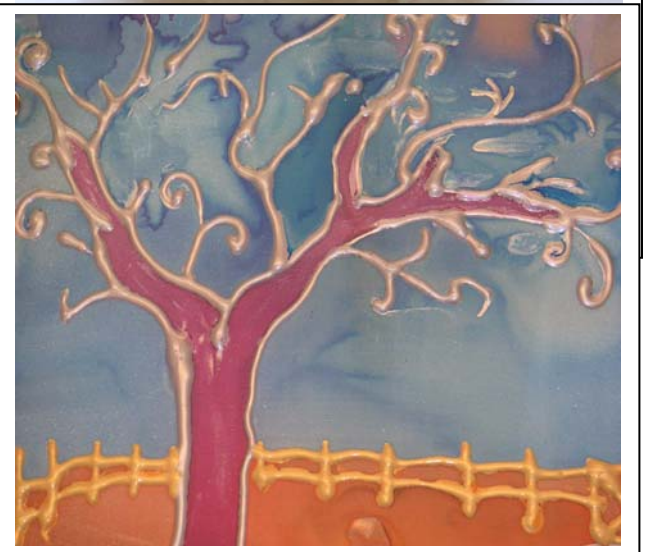
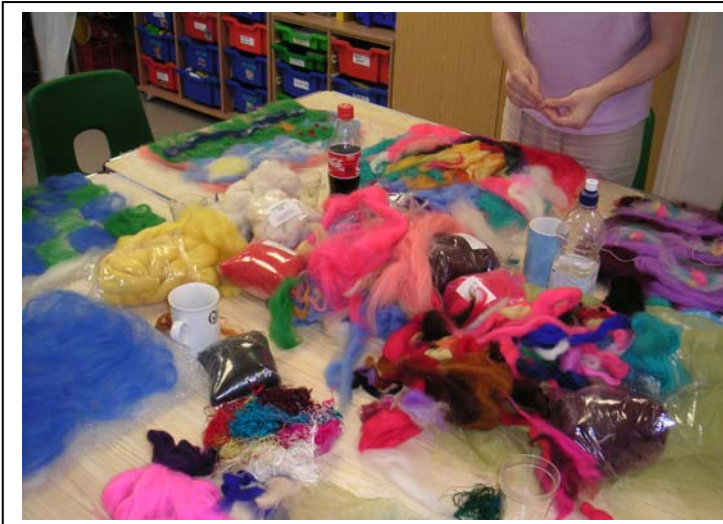


My Time My Space Full Report Summer 2005



our funders:



our partners:

Bath & North East Somerset PCT
Bath & North East Somerset Health Visiting Team
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Waterside Family Centre, Bath
Hazelwood Day Nursery



nesa

My Time My Space

Report on Pilot Projects 2 (January 05 to July 05)

1 Background

This project has come about through the creation of a partnership between **nesa** and Wansdyke Health Visitor Team and has progressed to Health Visiting teams across the Bath and North East Somerset PCT.

nesa works on a major arts in mental health project “Creative Links” in partnership with B&NES Community Mental Health Network and is extending work in this field with the Primary care Trust (PCT). In 2003 **nesa** received substantial capital funding from Arts Council England for the Radstock Art Project which included the creation of a specialist visual arts teaching space based at Radstock Youth Centre. **nesa** then established a programme of activities with an emphasis on participation by socially excluded groups.

Janet Weeks from Wansdyke Health Visitor Team learnt about a successful pilot arts project for women with postnatal depression in Stockport through the Arts on Prescription Service and was interested in setting up a similar project in Norton Radstock. She had been working individually with a large caseload of women experiencing postnatal depression and could see the need to bring them together for an activity with a positive focus.

nesa staff and Janet Weeks made contact at a Norton Radstock Inter-Agency Forum and started discussing a possible project in Spring 2003. See report on Pilot Project Course 1 (November 03 to February 04)

The pilot project ran in Radstock during 2003 and 2004 then at the request of Health Visitors across B&NES for this service, funding was secured in 2005 to extend the provision.

Funding in 2005 was secured from:

- Arts Council England South West
- Quartet (formerly the Greater Bristol Foundation)
- Bath & North East Somerset Adult and Community Education Service (towards tutor, material, crèche and venue costs)
- Chew Valley School – Performing Arts College

The funding allowed for the development of this service in and around Bath and North East Somerset. A development worker was employed on a one-day-a-week post for 7 months to develop the My Time My Space project and pilot in Radstock, Keynsham, Bath and Chew Valley with the Health Visiting teams. The support also extended to the newly formed ‘Out of the Blue’ group formed by participants from My Time My Space who having finished this

course wanted to progress to form their own group and fundraising for arts activities and childcare provision. This report covers these developments.

2 Aim

To provide quality arts based learning opportunities for up to 54 women suffering from post-natal depression living in Bath & North east Somerset, in order to promote overall mental health and well-being.

3 Management

The project was formed as a partnership between **nesa** and Bath & North East Somerset Health Visitor Teams. The partners agreed to take on the following responsibilities:

nesa:

- Recruiting, contracting and managing artists
- Creating promotional fliers
- Provision of workshop venue and equipment
- Financial administration of project
- Overall responsibility for health and safety of arts activity
- Overall responsibility to funder
- Coordinating project evaluation and producing final report

Health Visitor Team:

- Liaising with Bath Area Play Project, Percy Community Centre, Waterside Family Centre, Bath and Hazelwood Day Nursery, Keynsham to provide a crèche service fulfilling all legal health and safety requirements
- Provision of crèche toys and equipment
- Recruiting, assessing and supporting participants
- Providing a health visitor to support each session
- Assisting with the completion of project paperwork supplied by the funder
- Contributing to the health and safety risk assessment in terms of participant risk
- Overall responsibility for health and safety of any non-arts activity
- Contributing to project evaluation particularly undertaking evaluation of the health benefits to participants and completing a partner evaluation form

During the course of the project a steering group was formed with representatives from:

- **nesa**
- PCT Bath & North East Somerset Health Visitor Teams
- PCT Mental Health Promotion
- PCT Pals/Public Involvement
- Participants

The role of the steering group was to oversee the running of the projects, monitor and evaluate progress, and actively promote the development of the project across B&NES including making links with other projects and services.

The steering group met every 3 months.

4 Project Format

The projects provided the following workshops:

Radstock Art Project – 6 sessions of visual arts activity (spring)
 Radstock Art Project - 12 sessions of visual arts activity (summer)
 Hazelwood Day Nursery, Keynsham -12 sessions of visual arts activity
 Waterside Family Centre, Bath - 9 sessions of visual arts activity
 Chew Magna Millennium Hall, Chew Valley -10 sessions of performing arts activity
 Out of the Blue – 3 sessions of visual arts activity based at Radstock Art Project and the Community Bus depot

nesa recruited two more artists to work on the projects on the strength of their ability to be adaptable, offer a range of techniques and with experience of working in the field of mental health. Artists were asked to submit proposals which:

- Introduced either techniques in visual arts or performing arts
- Explored participants feelings about motherhood whilst learning new art techniques
- Introduced art forms that could be developed into the creation of an end product

Philippa Forsey worked in Radstock and Keynsham (silk-painting, clay, sculpture, felt making, painting and willow work), Lisa Hodge worked in Radstock and Bath (silk-painting, clay, sculpture, felt making, painting and willow work) and Vivienne Gordon worked in Chew Valley (dance, mask making, drawing). The emphasis was for participants to use this time to be creative. The brief given to artists was therefore purely to introduce new art techniques to teach new skills and to build confidence and self-esteem. Each artist produced a creative menu to offer participants which would allow them to chose and develop several art forms. Once the course was running however, some women actually opted to create end products for the baby.

Participants were referred from Health Visitors across B&NES PCT. Each course was open to up to 10 women at a time although in practice numbers had to be restricted to 8 because of the number of crèche places available.

A member of the Health Visitor Team supported sessions. The health visitor worked alongside the participants, offering individual or group support as needed throughout the session and self-help information during the session on aspects of childcare and parenting.

Crèche provision:

An on site crèche was provided by trained crèche workers who were also CRB cleared. They were:

Bath Area Play Project in Radstock and Bath
Percy Community Centre in Chew Valley and Bath
Waterside Family Centre in Bath
Hazelwood Day Nursery in Keynsham
The Community Bus for 'Out of the Blue'

'Creche workers were brilliant, coped when the babies were playing up.'

'I really trusted leaving my baby in the creche'

5 Evaluation Methods

A range of evaluation methods have been used to provide the findings for this report:

- Continual informal feedback by participants to health visitor and artist throughout the course
- Completion of funders "End of Course Review" forms by participants as some courses were funded by Adult and Community Education
- End of course evaluation using post-its and reflective diary for participants to record their answers to questions posed
- Use of Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale at start and end of course to track impact on participant's depression

6 Findings

6.1 Health Benefits

The impact of the course on participants' depression was measured using the Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale (EPDS). Scores were recorded before the group began but in some areas time restrictions made it difficult to follow up the EPDS immediately after the group.

"Lots of activities of a creative kind brings out the joy in you: painting, drawing, dancing, mask making and lots more. Not being judged on what you do gives a good feeling".

'I really look forward to coming to the group and seeing people who know what I am going through. I felt more confident with other mums who feel the same as I do.'

'I feel more confident around people'

'It made me feel positive about myself and gave me a sense of achievement.'

"Very good – now feel sane."

"Meeting people in the same situation as me (depression) & building my confidence. I enjoyed how to do silk paintings as I've never tried this before. It allowed me to learn that I didn't have to be perfect all the time."

'I would have felt isolated and lost without this'

'I'm not feeling 1/2 as depressed as I was'

'Thank you for inviting me to experience this course & I feel it has made me a more relaxed & positive person.'

6.2 Personal and Social Benefits

The importance of coming together with other women who shared the same experiences was highlighted throughout the evaluation:

Some participants comments are:

'It has taught me to find time for myself'

'Have really enjoyed MYSELF again! Couldn't wait to come back, and can't wait for next week! We need this every day! Wow! This was brilliant. So glad I decided to come. Liked meeting other mothers, enjoyed chatting, having

space apart from my daughter and to be creative on top of all that - what can I say - excellent ! Thank you'

'Have a real feeling of achievement + self worth.'

'It was really excellent and it was lovely to be able to talk & ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere'

'It's giving me something to look forward to. I enjoyed being here & it's given me ideas for the future'.

"Met people who I otherwise might not have met. Nice to meet other women who sometimes struggle as I do, so I didn't have to pretend that I didn't. Also nice to meet other women while children not there."

'I really look forward to coming to the group and seeing people who know what I am going through. I felt more confident with other mums who feel the same as I do.'

'Friday is the one day I focus on - the rest of the week'

'What I like about the group is that we are all here for similar reasons so I feel I'm not going to be judged. I can relate and chat to people, it's more relaxed'

'I wouldn't have gone to any other groups, I've made new friends.'

The health visitor reported several women experiencing severe separation anxiety in the initial weeks when leaving their baby at the crèche. For some it was the first time they had ever been parted from their baby. However, the benefits of having a time for themselves away from their children, and the demands of motherhood soon became apparent to all:

Health Visitor: 'I'm still collecting EPDS scores but all have improved. Women have also sought further art/recreational activities, and are still meeting together. One mum has overcome her anxiety about joining groups, another leaving her children,'

The groups were run in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. There was lots of healing laughter. The fact that the health visitors took part alongside their clients was important – they too were nervous and unconfident at the start and made mistakes along the way and became the willing butt of much light-hearted teasing. The support of the health visitors was much appreciated by both participants and artists:

'The art classes on Fridays for me are wonderful; it's a time for me it's a place I can be me, with other people who will understand, and a place & time I can express myself in lots of different ways through art. I just wish it was for longer.'

'Really helped me to integrate again + gave me the confidence to start socialising again! Lovely to achieve something each week too + obviously having time to myself was extremely valuable to me + beneficial to my daughter too (more energy to give to her!).'

'All the people involved were really helpful and supportive'

'It made me realise I am not the only one with these feelings and made more confident'.

Both artists and health visitors attested to a steady growth in confidence in participants as the course progressed. Art tutors focused on teaching techniques which resulted in pleasing end products. Participants themselves recognised the positive impact on their self-esteem:

'I am much happier and feel more settled inside'

'Meeting people in the same situation as me (depression) & building my confidence. I enjoyed how to do silk paintings as I've never tried this before. It allowed me to learn that I didn't have to be perfect all the time'

Most participants feared the cessation of the course and many wanted to see further opportunities for the group to meet up set up once the course finished eg. baby massage, day trips, social event, further art activities, relaxation. The health visitor did not have the capacity to organise any immediate follow up but this in itself appears to have had some positive benefits with several participants enrolling on other community based courses.

A committed group of women from the Radstock area have formed a constituted progression group called 'Out of the Blue'. They have put in funding applications and have successfully fundraised enough money to ensure that they can run their own art workshops over the next year with plans to continue long term. This progression is impressive and inspiring mothers from the other areas to set up similar groups and to fundraise for their own art workshops with crèche and continuity into the future.

'Out of the Blue' contributed to 'International Womens Day' event by making a banner which was displayed at the Guild Hall, Bath for the prestigious awards ceremony.

6.3 Skills acquired

Participants reported that they had learnt a wide range of new skills and techniques:

- Painting on silk
- Willow sculpture
- Design and use of colour
- Felt making
- Sculpture in wire and modroc
- Clay techniques
- Dance techniques

Overall participants thought highly of the quality of teaching provided by the artists:

'I learnt new skills, met new people & realized that it's good to have a bit of time for myself.'

'Nothing could improve the course except that it is not long enough. We are coming to an end & I wish it could happen again after the holidays'

'I would recommend this course to anyone - it has been great'.

All participants were interested in continuing onto further courses if they could access childcare and the distance made it possible.

'Learnt I need my own time to do creative activities with no pressure of what the end results are like. I've learnt the benefits of a couple of hours time without my children'

7 Evaluation Summary

7.1 Strengths

- The project has had a significant positive impact on participants' mental health, sense of well being, social skills and educational achievement.
- Level of commitment, enthusiasm and involvement by health visitors a strong factor in success

- Quality spaces in which to work contributed positively to enhanced self-esteem and provided a calm working environment
- Central locations important for women to access the activity
- Creative arts menu offered
- Personal and professional qualities of the artists was critical to the success of the project
- Professionally run crèche allowed participants to develop confidence to leave their children, sometimes for the first time
- Women's own health visitors were able to track their progress post group and report back to the link health visitor.
- The project has had a long-term impact on participants' lives with the majority progressing onto other educational/social/creative activities as the direct result of their involvement in the project.
- Health visitor working alongside clients has normalised professional/participant relationship.
- A committed steering group with members prepared to offer support and advice and keen to see the project extended
- The project goes from strength to strength because of the strong partnership between the health visiting team and **nesa** and the high level of commitment, skills and motivation amongst those involved
- Most of the women involved that have completed a course have expressed a desire to continue onto further activities/courses. At the time of writing Out of the Blue have succeeded in being awarded a £5,000 Awards for All grant to enable them to plan and develop their own arts courses with childcare.
- Health Visitor job description aids job roles

7.2 Weaknesses

- Level of attendance by some women very erratic – this is due to the nature of their depression and particular social problems and isolation
- Difficulties in communication with the manager of the crèche provision in Radstock led to misunderstandings about fees and transport charges.

- Number of available crèche places limited enrolment. Only 8 women could be accepted as crèche places were all full.
- Problems getting all the women to fill in all the evaluation material. Lost creative time filling in evaluation but insufficient time to complete so health visitor had to spend considerable time afterwards following up individuals and this was not always successful.
- Lack of follow-up activities in place when course ended. Not all women could access the other opportunities on offer through **nesa** because of lack of crèche provision.
- Feeling of abandonment by some women as course comes to an end
- Restrictions on health visitors time makes it difficult to record EPDS scores at the end.

8 Recommendations

8.1 Immediate

- Longer sessions were requested by the participants
- Written contract with crèche providers with fee and transport costs clearly itemised
- Last session of each programme should be extended to enable all participants to fully evaluate the programme at the time.

8.2 Long term.

- To develop relationships with other funding organisations. One outcome of this would be the reduction of inappropriate paperwork for participants, artist and health visitor.
- To develop an ongoing service across B&NES.
- If there was long term funding Health Visitors would like to do long term tracking to follow participants as time does not allow for this at present.
- That in future programmes the last session of each course be extended to allow for evaluation to ensure that this is done thoroughly and immediately at the end of the course and to properly capture progress.

- Consideration be given to the provision of follow-up activities to ensure that the health and social benefits of the project are maintained when the arts sessions come to an end
- Eventually for this programme to contribute to the clinical standard for the Treatment of postnatal depression in the National Service Framework for Mental Health in B&NES PCT.
- Links with Bath University and research students